



City of Rockville

## MEMORANDUM

August 13, 2009

TO: Potential Televised Election Debate/Forum Hosts

FROM: Jennifer Kimball, Assistant City Manager

SUBJECT: Campaign Policy and Expression of Interest Form

Thank you for your interest in hosting a televised Mayor and Council candidate debate or forum. Please review the attached **City of Rockville Campaign Policy** adopted by the Mayor and Council in February 2003 and revised in July 2006. Complete the attached **Expression of Interest Form** to indicate your group's interest in hosting a televised forum. To be eligible to host a televised event, your organization must agree to abide by the Campaign Policy. Your group also is responsible for making all the arrangements with the candidates.

**Televised debates or forums must be held between Sept. 14 and Oct. 20** to ensure they can be replayed on Rockville 11 prior to the election. Televised forums cannot be scheduled at times when official City meetings are televised live (Mayor and Council, Planning Commission or Historic District Commission meetings). Available dates include:

Sept. 15, 22, 24, 29, 30  
Oct. 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 19

**Staff will review all Expression of Interest Forms. If there are more than three organizations that meet the criteria of the Campaign Policy, a drawing will be conducted to select up to three groups.** Staff will finalize logistics and other arrangements with the selected organizations, including a Rockville 11 staff visit to the proposed site to determine whether it is adequate for television production.

Please return this interest form no later than **Friday, Sept. 4** to Jennifer Kimball, Assistant City Manager, 111 Maryland Ave., Rockville, MD 20850.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 240-314-8104 or [jkimball@rockvillemd.gov](mailto:jkimball@rockvillemd.gov). Thank you for your interest in the City of Rockville's election process.

**City of Rockville**  
**Expression of Interest in Hosting a Televised 2009 Election Candidate Forum**

*Please print clearly.*

Name of Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (daytime): \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Has organization sponsored candidate debates/forums in the past?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

If yes, for what office and what year? \_\_\_\_\_

Is this organization affiliated in any way with a partisan political organization?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Proposed date and time of debate/forum: 1<sup>st</sup> choice \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> choice \_\_\_\_\_

Who will moderate the debate/forum? \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed location of debate/forum

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Seating capacity: \_\_\_\_\_

Accessible to people with disabilities: Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_ Unsure \_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_ (name of organization) has received and agrees to abide by the campaign policy regarding televised debates/forums.

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Print Name and Position in Organization:** \_\_\_\_\_

# **Mayor and Council Election Campaign Guidelines**

*Revised July 2006*

*Resolution 11-06*

The purpose of this political campaign policy is to delineate the ground rules for City employees, the Mayor and Council, and candidates for public office to follow. This policy will be enforced by the City Manager and may be changed by resolution of the Mayor and Council. The City of Rockville holds non-partisan elections for the Mayor and Council offices every two years in odd-numbered years.

## **City Resources**

City personnel, equipment, facilities, postage, City letterhead or official stationery, and funding, will not be used for promotion or opposition to any candidate for political office, political party, or slate of candidates for any office or by an organization or individual advocating for or against a particular issue on a local, state, or national level. This would not preclude an independent, non-partisan organization (e.g. League of Women Voters or the Alliance of Rockville Neighborhoods Association) from holding a candidate forum or debate in a City facility or from a debate or candidate forum being televised in the manner outlined in this policy nor would this prohibit the City from its lobbying efforts at the County, state and national level.

## **Dissemination of City of Rockville**

### **Mayor and Council Candidate Information**

Candidates for City of Rockville Mayor and Council elections are defined as persons who are certified to appear on the ballot according to the City Clerk. The City of Rockville will provide all Mayor and Council candidates the opportunity for one written and one oral statement per candidate to be distributed to citizens. The City will not publish or televise any libelous or slanderous materials. Candidate statements will be distributed by the City of Rockville in the following ways:

**Rockville Reports** - One statement and one photograph (of the candidate only) for each candidate will be published in the November issue of Rockville Reports. Statements must not exceed 250 words and will not be edited. Contact information, including an e-mail address, Web site, and/or phone number that are provided with the statement will be published and will not count toward the 250 word limit. All candidates must meet the City's deadline for submission in order to have this information published.

**City Web Site** - The same candidate statement, contact information, and photograph published in Rockville Reports will be published on the City's Web site. Statements must not exceed 250 words. No links will be made to any other Web site for the candidate or other organization from the candidate statements so as not to appear as an endorsement of any particular candidate. Candidate statements will be taken down from the City's Web site approximately four weeks after the Mayor and Council election.

**TRC 11 (cable channel)** - Each candidate will be offered the opportunity to tape a statement not to exceed four minutes. TRC 11 will schedule these sessions for all candidates. All statements will be filmed by TRC 11 staff using the same set.

Candidate information for any other political offices will not be disseminated in any form through the City of Rockville.

### **Parades - Participation by Elected Officials - Rockville and Other Jurisdictions**

Current elected officials (City of Rockville and other local, state, and federal office holders) may participate in the Memorial Day Parade if they adhere to the following rules.

- If an individual is both an elected official and a candidate, the individual is invited to participate only as an elected official.
- Each elected official will be allowed to have up to 10 people in his/her parade unit.
- Campaign activity at the parade must be confined to areas outside the designated parade route. The designated parade route is defined as the street area between the curbs.
- The City will provide automobiles for as many elected officials as possible, on a first-requested/first served basis.
- The City will provide signs for elected officials' parade vehicles, stating the name and office. Campaign signs, banners, etc. are not allowed on automobiles, nor can the official or his/her supporters carry them on the designated parade route.
- For safety reasons, and to keep the parade moving, there will be no distribution of balloons or written literature of any kind by the elected official or members of the parade unit while on the parade route. Literature may be distributed along the sidewalk outside of the parade route.

### **Parades - Candidates for City of Rockville Mayor and Council**

Official candidates for City of Rockville Mayor and Council offices, who do not currently hold office, may participate in the parade. To participate in the parade, the candidate must have fulfilled the requirements for candidacy by filing the appropriate documents with the City Clerk's Office, and have received notification from the City Clerk's Office that the documents are in order.

[NOTE: Currently, City law requires that the forms used for filing for City elections be available to potential candidates by May 1 of the election year. It is recommended that this paperwork be made available earlier in the year to facilitate candidates' participation in the parade.]

- Current elected officials who are also official candidates will be provided with signs for the parade vehicle stating their name, current office held, and the City of Rockville office for which he/she is a candidate.
- All rules and policies applicable to participation by elected officials in the parade apply to City or Rockville elected officials and candidates for Rockville offices - see Parades - Participation by Elected Officials.
- The City will provide signs for candidates' parade vehicles. The signs will state the name and the office they seek. Parade cars may be provided for candidates who are not current office holders, if available.

### **Parades - Candidates for all other races**

Candidates for political offices other than the Rockville Mayor and Council who do not currently hold public office will not be allowed to participate in the Memorial Day parade (or any other parade sponsored or co-sponsored by the City of Rockville).

### **Special Events**

An area will be set aside at the Hometown Holidays, Independence Day, Rockville Rotary Twilight Runfest, Spirit of Rockville, and the Antique and Classic Car Show for candidates for any political office to meet and greet the public, to distribute literature, etc. No helium balloons are allowed for environmental reasons. All candidates must obtain a permit to set up a political campaign booth in the specified area of the event site, and will be charged a fee. Political candidates and supporters may campaign at City events without setting up a booth - no permit or fee required.

### **Campaign Materials**

Campaign materials may not be left or distributed inside City facilities with the exception of materials allowed on Election Day as prescribed by the City's election laws.

### **Political Ads in City Publications**

The City of Rockville will not accept ads for any publication sponsored by or supporting or opposing any candidate or elected official for any political office or political party.

### **Sponsorship**

The City of Rockville will not accept sponsorships for City events from any candidate or elected official for political office, political party or slate of candidates for any office.

## **Televised Debate or Candidate Forums**

### **Debates or Forums for Mayor and Council Elections**

The City may televise up to, but no more than, three candidate debates or forums for the Mayor and Council, each with the Mayoral candidates and Council candidates debating separately, on TRC 11 for City of Rockville Mayor and Council elections.

All forums or debates will be televised based on the following circumstances:

- Location and the adequacy for television production
- Availability of production schedule, on-air program schedule, adequate advanced notice, availability of personnel, equipment, and other resources
- Ability to televise it live, if possible
- All candidates appearing on the ballot are invited to participate
- It is sponsored/hosted by an independent, non-partisan organization that does not endorse candidates (such as the League of Women Voters) and focuses on citywide issues
- City staff are not involved in any way in the hosting, moderating, facilitating, or asking of questions - only television production and possibly facility space will be provided
- No editing will be done with the exception of adding opening and closing graphics, transitions between multiple tapes, correction of technical problems, etc.
- If the Mayor and Council chambers is used, the set should be altered so it does not appear to be the same set up as a regular Mayor and Council meeting

Up to, but no more than, three debates or forums may be televised based on a process that includes a written proposal meeting the City's criteria. A drawing will take place to select the organizations if more than three apply and meet the City's criteria listed above. Televised debates will be held after the filing date for Mayor and Council office.

### **Debates or Forums for Non-City Elections**

The City may televise on TRC 11 up to, but no more than, four forums for the following offices for which Rockville citizens vote: County Executive, County Council at-large, County Council District 3, and District 17. No more than four debates or forums will be televised for each election season, including both the primary and general elections.

All forums or debates will be televised based on the same circumstances listed above.

Mayor and Council will appoint a neutral third party (such as ARNA) to organize the debate or forum events. The appointed third party will have sole responsibility to determine the format of the debate or forum events. Televised debates will be held after the filing date for each office.